



Creative muses sing in Beijing



Post-70s generation highlights 798 Art Festival

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Once, an isolated Beijing could boast only its traditional treasures despite being the capital.

Within the city limits, creative power has grown silently. The 798 Art Festival, iMart, UMARS, 500m3 and Get It Louder events are ready to rock the world art scene.

Creativity is brimming over in new fashion sites like D.Park, and shops and restaurants offering an original flavor.

Don't forget the Internet, the playground of Beijing's young avatar makers.

This May Day special issue brings the emerging art scene to your doorstep.



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Creative carnival in iMart

Aji Amu

By He Jianwei

T-shirts, toys and badges are available at the MIDI Music Festival this May. A group of young creative people gathering their goods at the festival exhibit and sell their creative ideas on the iMart.

iMart has become a carnival of young designers in China – a place for them to exhibit and sell creative works. It is also a good platform for young designers to exchange ideas about design.

More than 30 people brought their goods to iMart this May, and *Beijing Today* brings you interviews with a few of them.

Aji Amu is a pair of mummy toys. The black toy is Amu, and the white one is Aji. Ji and Mu mean "toy bricks" in Chinese.

The mummy brothers were created last September. "I love mummies when I was a child because of their unique figure and color. I want to show people that mummies aren't scary, but are mysterious," Luo Ji, one of the creators of the toy, said.

"Creativity is trying to find subtle change in common life," he said.

"I can make friends at iMart, and it's a chance to spread my Aji and Amu to more people. I hope one day, my mummy toy will be the number one in China," he said.

Brainno is an art group founded by three people in October 2005. They advocate unrestricted art. "The artist is not subjectively restricted by figure, concept or aesthetic taste. Just draw what you like, and what you are interested in," Wang Luosi, one of the members in Brainno, said.

In Wang's mind, creativity in Chinese means extraordinary ideas. "I prefer to regard the word 'creative' as imaginative and inventive, because my works are usually mild rather than shocking, and inspiration does not explode out of my mind," she said.

"iMart is a platform for ordinary people – where we can chat with each other and learn from each other," she said.

Gary Baseman, Tim Biskup, Fuco Ueda, Voshitomo Nara and Aya Takano are her favorite artists. However, Wang doesn't have a definite target for her career. "I just try my best to draw every piece of work," she said.

Brainno



Wazzap

Chen Junwei and Fu Wei jointly created the brand "wazzap" for their T-shirts a year and a half ago. Their shirt designs are usually about music, movies or illustrations.

Youth, jokes and fashions are the key elements of their T-shirts. "Each shirt design has a limited number of pressings, because we want to show the spirit of individuality," Fu said. "Creativity means you can always have fresh, new ideas," he said. They said they consider iMart a very attractive platform. "We can make interesting friends in iMart, and find more inspiration for our designs," he said.



Zhang Taki



Zhang Taki's Chinese name is Zhang Yang. She creates various goods, like toys and jewelry. Anything that interests her, she will make.

"Once I made a purse and wore it to my friend's party. When they saw it, one of them grabbed it from me because it was too cute. I was a little bit disappointed, but still happy that they liked my bag so much," she said.

"In my mind, to be simple and direct with your message is to be creative," she said.

"iMart is really fun. It reminds me of playing house in my childhood," she said.

"This is a person who is not understood; this is a person who needs to be understood," Ma Jin wrote about himself on his blog.

It's hard to say who Ma is. He has too many names. Full Jacket is the name of his brand. "Autism 155" is the name of his studio. His nickname is "Siben Jin," which means "Jin elopes."

He doesn't make toys or T-shirts.

He is something of a writer. He writes poetry, novels and makes videos in the spirit of independent production.

"If your logic is beyond the doctrine of concept; if your inspiration is not easily understood by common minds; if you probe the reality of life and promoting the consciousness of freedom and independent thought; then we can call you creative," he said.

"The iMart is a personal artistic carnival. Its opportunities for direct and free communication attract me," he said.

(Continued on page 3 ...)

Full Jacket



Turning socks into dolls

By Jackie Zhang

Beautiful dolls are every girl's favorite, whether a child or grown-up. Sock-dolls, with their unique material and cute figures, may be an attractive alternative for doll lovers seeking something beyond Barbie, Mickey and Minnie.



"No 3 Nor 4" is the name of the sock-doll stand at iMart. Its owner, Chen Li, says she wanted to convey a carefree lifestyle with the name, which is pronounced "bu san bu si" in Chinese, a way to say something is informal and nonsensical.

"My sock-dolls are all in unspecific shapes. Some people may think a doll is a donkey and others may think the same one is a rabbit. You could call them unshaped dolls," Chen says.

Her new use for socks is something Chen stumbled on a while ago.

"A friend of mine bought me a book from Japan telling how to make handcrafts with used socks and gloves. The book really sparked my interest. That's when I decided to try my hand at animal dolls," Chen says.

"I'm not that good at needlework ... But the infinite opportunities to vent my creative energy while making the dolls attracted me," she says.

Since she started making sock dolls, Chen's life has become very busy, and her work has found her many new friends. She says she feels originality means adding personal touches to a common theme, or connecting two new ideas.

"For most people, life is dull and monotonous. I hope people can find something interesting in their lives. Life can be new and exciting as long as you are willing to be creative."



A mosaic of light

By Jackie Zhang

Wei Lina, a girl from northern China with an interest in drawing, has started to combine mosaics and light.

Her main works in lamps and candle holders. Two years ago, she bought two books about patching and pasting together mosaics and was inspired by the colorful images.

"I found that the colorful features of mosaic were limited by their use in rooms, bathrooms and outdoors. That's when I decided to try to redesign mosaics, and add them to crystal glassware and combine mosaics with light," Wei says.

The tools she needed were difficult to come by in China. A friend helped her procure them abroad, and Wei fervently began making mosaic lamps and candle holders. Wei says she hopes her works will help people feel warm during long nights.

Since she started, a few other designers have joined with Wei to open a studio for mosaic lights. Wei named her works "Nar," which means "there" in Chinese. "I want to say that life is there. Most people's life is 'here,' but there is a new life 'there.' We should always look for new things and happiness," Wei said.

She says design ideas are everywhere in daily life, and inspiration is never out of reach. "Whether you decide to change old things or to develop new ones, creation is just adding new concepts to ordinary things – giving them a new face," she says.

"The power of design is great. It can change a person's life or the society," she says.

But China's design industry doesn't have a good atmosphere, she says. Many designers work in a poor environment.

"I hope iMart can improve and shape China's design history," she says.

Patching together their dreams

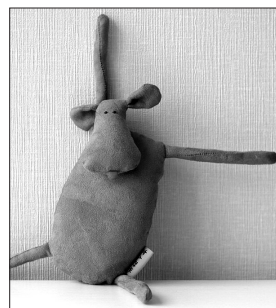
By Jackie Zhang

Yang Fang, a twenty-something lady, started producing handmade dolls and bags out of cloth scraps a year ago with three of her friends. The four started the job because it was all their poor health permitted, but since then, they've taken their work to heart.

Yang and her friends stayed in Beijing to find work after graduation. Last Spring Festival, Nana and Yangyang, two of her friends, asked her to join them in making dolls, but Yang was having an extreme bout of illness.

"Several months later, I joined them. Making dolls and bags out of colorful scraps was a new beginning for me," Yang says. "Both Nana and I have health problems that keep us home most of the time. It's important to find something to stay occupied with, and making dolls is great for girls."

"Lady Time" is their brand name, a name to try and convey the charm and memory of patching every-



thing together. Most of their products are cute human figurines. "We also make some shaped like animals. Our only guiding rule is that whatever we make has to be cute," Yang says.

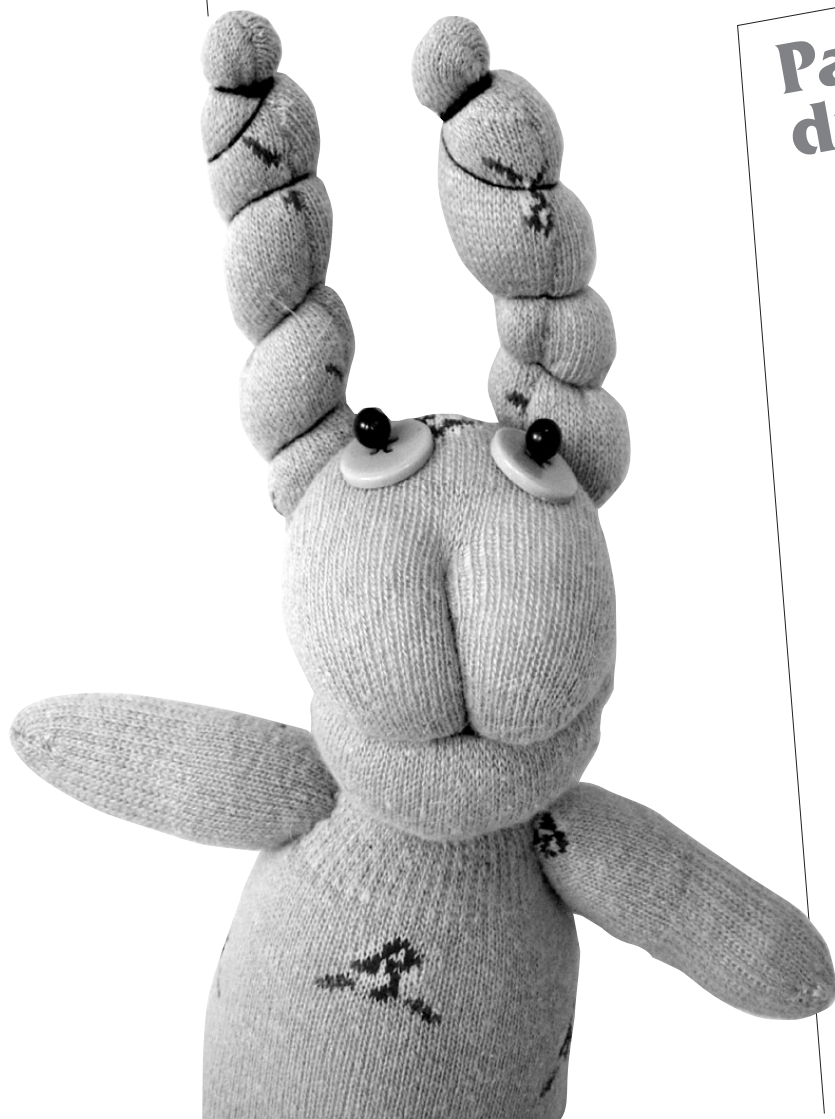
To make the dolls and bags, Yang and her friends go to market along South Third Ring Road to buy cloth, which they then cut up into shapes and patterns. To make a doll or bag takes a lot of planning.

Last August, Yang and her friends opened their store next to Beijing University of Chemical Technology. They went to last year's iMart in Guangzhou to meet with other creators.

"I met with several artists [there]. Their ideas were very creative and they enlightened me about what other kinds of materials can be used," Yang says. The group started working with new materials like feathers, clasps, leather, metal and paillettes after iMart.

Yang says their dream is to make home decorations and start a class teaching how to make dolls, bags and other handcrafts. "We're not stable enough yet. Right now, we need to focus on our products," she says.

The four are saving their dream for the future.





March to Mars



By He Jianwei

A march to Mars? It sounds impossible. "Imagination and perseverance could make our dream of marching to Mars a reality," Liu Jianfei, the organizer of the UMARS Platform Toys exhibition, said.



More than 200 young designers, both domestic and overseas, have created designs based on the common mold provided by UMARS. UMARS, or "Uncle Mars" in Chinese, was created by Liu Jianfei, the curator of the exhibition. He asked designers to redesign the UMARS figurine, and then paint it graffiti-style on skateboards. People can visit the exhibition to see different UMARS designs, and even make their own. *Beijing Today* has interviewed the curator and the creators of two different UMARS designs.



UMARS Platform Toys

Where: Building 1, Disanji Creative Zone, Zhongguancun, Haidian
When: May 1-May 15
Blog: umars.blog.sohu.com

The creator's mind

"It's a feast of imagination and creativity; it's a party for the young creators," Liu Jianfei said.

Liu said he finds toy figurine designs very attractive. "Remodeling a toy is a challenge, and demands a lot of technical finesse from designers. The interactivity involved in remodeling the toy really suits the spirit of the figurine," he said.

In Liu's mind, UMARS is lonely, kind and a daydreamer.

"Every designer is the creator of his or her own 'creature,' the toy, of course. Aside from the designers, visitors can paint their own UMARS," he said.

"March to Mars," the name of the exhibition, has two meanings: it's both possible and unreachable. "With imagination and perseverance we can realize our dream of marching to Mars. Imagination can turn the impossible into the possible, and perseverance can make the possible a reality," he said.

"Mars is not a planet in the cosmos. It's a place in people's hearts where they imagine traveling," he said.



UMARS' girlfriend

Photo provided by Li Yuepeng

U Jump

Liu Anzhe's remodeled UMARS is named "U Jump." The work tells the story of a hopping zombie in Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) era costume. "I was really into zombie stories when I was designing U Jump," he said. "UMARS is, in my mind, firstly an uncle – maybe 40 years old. When I first heard of Mars, I was reminded of Ultraman," Liu said. "I want to express that the zombie can have a total change of heart and be reborn

after the death, which is what zombie stories in Chinese usually talk about," he said.

Fashion and returning to ancient times are two elements Liu applies in his works.

He enjoys toys and expressing his own ideas through them, so he decided to participate in the exhibition.

"Getting to design a toy by myself was pretty exciting, but I'm still not satisfied. The freedom of expression involved is, to me, the most attractive point of this exhibition," he said.



U Jump

Photo provided by Liu Anzhe

UMARS' girlfriend

When Li Yuepeng received her UMARS, she decided to craft a new toy combining the features of UMARS and her own toy, "Leeka." "I wanted to make a female toy, because I guessed that Leeka might meet UMARS somewhere, some time. The resulting story might be interesting for me and my audience," she said.

Chiefly a web designer, Li has only designed toys for one year. "Both UMARS and Leeka are from beyond our planet. The difference is that Leeka's home planet is unknown," she said.

"Liu Jianfei called it 'UMARS' girlfriend' after seeing my work," she said.

"Remolding and graffiti can inspire creativity and train aesthetic tastes. It's not hard to make an artistic work if you just come up with an outlet for your creativity," she said.



Posters of March to Mars
Photos provided by Liu Jianfei

500m³ Design

A room for your imagination

By Gan Tian

The 500m³ Design: GBD Art District Phase 1 Architecture Competition gives everyone a platform to design his own space. The two months of fierce competition have already attracted hundreds of designers to leave their creative marks on local architecture.

What is GBD?

Covering an area of 450,000 square meters, the Gaobeidian (GBD) area will not go to waste. From now until 2010, the area will be broken up into six smaller areas, all concerning art and creativity: GBD 500m³ Design District Phase One, Flagship Store Street, great for people who are crazy about shopping, Qingming Shanghe Street, with a typical Chinese name conjuring images of Qing era dress, Peach Blossom Island, which sounds like a new travel page, Creative Land and the Business District, which I hate.

The area lies just outside Fifth Ring Road and offers a very good view of the countryside. If you want to have a pristine glimpse of the past, hurry up. Some crazy artists are about to sack it.

500m³ game starts

Initiated by Boloni Home Decor and planned with the Thinking Hands Company, the competition launched in February this year. They invited artists, architects, designers, and even ordinary people with an interest in designing a 500m³ room to submit their proposals to the committee. Winners will claim prizes valued at between 10,000 to 150,000 yuan and have priority leasing of the new 500m³ units.

The most exciting thing is that winning designs will be implemented within the 500m³ area, and the names of the winners will appear on the facade of the constructed buildings. Just imagine a room with your name in it? Isn't that better than an award? That could explain why more than 100 works were proposed from home and abroad in only a month.

Concept and ideas

Did you assume the GBD would be the CBD's sister? The truth seems stupid but funny, GBD means Gaobeidian, a place on the south bank of Tonghuihe River along Chang'an Jie. Yes, it has a relationship with the CBD – it is only five minutes away. One of the GBD's goals is to serve as a creative garden for the CBD, which might explain why the names sound familiar.

"The GBD is surrounded by woods and cut through by a canal; an expressway circles the area, connecting it to the surrounding city, and at the same time shaping it into a guarded community," Thinking Hand's press release said.

"500m³ Design Competition is not like a real estate project ... I think the GBD will become the best creative art district in Beijing, but it also faces challenges," Cai Ming, general manager of Boloni Home Decor, said, "Are there creative people in Beijing? When facing a new thing, are these people excited or numb? These answers are uncertain and will be examined by the market."

Requirements:

1. Clarify your concept visually using a medium of choice.
2. Clarify how modular solutions can be applied throughout the competition area.
3. Your design must abide by the dimensions of the blueprints of the dismantled structures, and fit within the designated area.
4. 50m² and 10m high are the limits, which means the design cannot be higher than 10m.

Where to use your imagination and creativity:

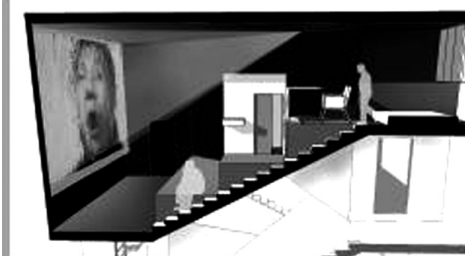
1. Ratio of length to width.
2. Floors, stairs inside or outside.
3. On the roof – but the total height of the construction should be no more than 10m.
4. You can sink the ground floor up to one meter below street level.
5. You can design several 500m³ units assembled together.

(Continued on page 6...)

Photos provided by
Thinking Hands Company



Combining functionality and beauty



THE LIVING ROOM WITH A MINI THEATRE, FOR MOVIE DIRECTORS.



Photos provided by Francesco Gatti

By Gan Tian

The Funnel House was designed by Italian architect Francesco Gatti and Chinese assistant Xiao Yinpu. "It is a 1000m³/2 double artists' house composed of two 500m³ put together so that the volume requirement is respected in all parts," wrote in Gatti's design.

The volume will be composed by pre-fabricated funnel-shape pieces combined in three different configurations, giving a total of six types of living typologies. Gatti believes this funnel concrete piece is linked to the memory and the metaphor of factory volumes. It can be used in different positions to create a small cinema or theater, or more abstract spaces like meditation towers, and for exhibitions.

What's special about the house is that there is no "plan" or "section." The spaces can have any functional usage depending on the configuration of layout when the unit is located inside the 10x10x10 cube.

Many artists face a conflict between

dream and reality. Architects share this dilemma. However, Gatti felt optimistic about his design, and said, "I think it may be easy to realize. It's not so complicated. I'd like it to be a nice art exhibition space, an office or a space for living and working."

Gatti's Italian thought strongly influences his art and architecture.

"I notice there are differences between artists and architects, but in Italy, architecture is only one branch of art. Artists have more knowledge, but architects care more about reality – where people must live. However, architecture must be both functional and beautiful," he said.

Yes, that's the concept of the Funnel House, function and beauty – they are just like the two wings of a bird.



Publicity, privacy and something in between

By Gan Tian

Zhang Jing found out about the competition right before its deadline. "I had just arrived in Beijing. When I was reading magazines, I learned about the competition," Zhang said. That didn't stop him from submitting some excellent works.

"I took part in a design competition concerning global warming in London, which took me half a year to plan and submit. In the end, I was still late. I was also working on a SOHO project at the same time," he said.

These two works gave Zhang several hints for his 500m³ work. "I would call it an extension of my previous work," he said.

Dubbed N32, Zhang's work is divided into three parts. You may know privacy and its opposite: publicity. What's between them? Zhang said it is "communication."

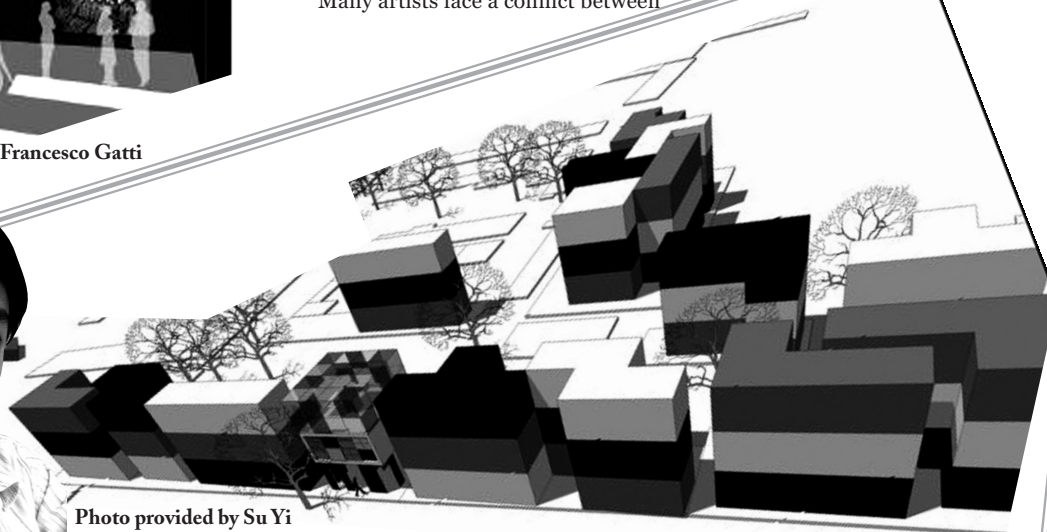
"I used golden ratios in all of the counting," Zhang said. He said it conveys the idea that good communication is based on a fixed rule of speaking and listening; for example, if you spent 38 percent of the time speaking 62 and percent listening, you would be a good communicator.

"I don't know whether enlarging public space will lead to a decrease in privacy," Zhang said.

He suggested the ratio has a relationship with business. Oh yes! Everyone has to bear costs for communication. Everyone.



Photo provided by Su Yi



Deigning a city with Tetris

By Gan Tian

Su Yi, a Guangzhou resident, thinks inside the box – literally. If you have never seen the horror flick, *The Cube*, you must have played *Tetris*. Su's designs are like playing *Tetris* with a city.

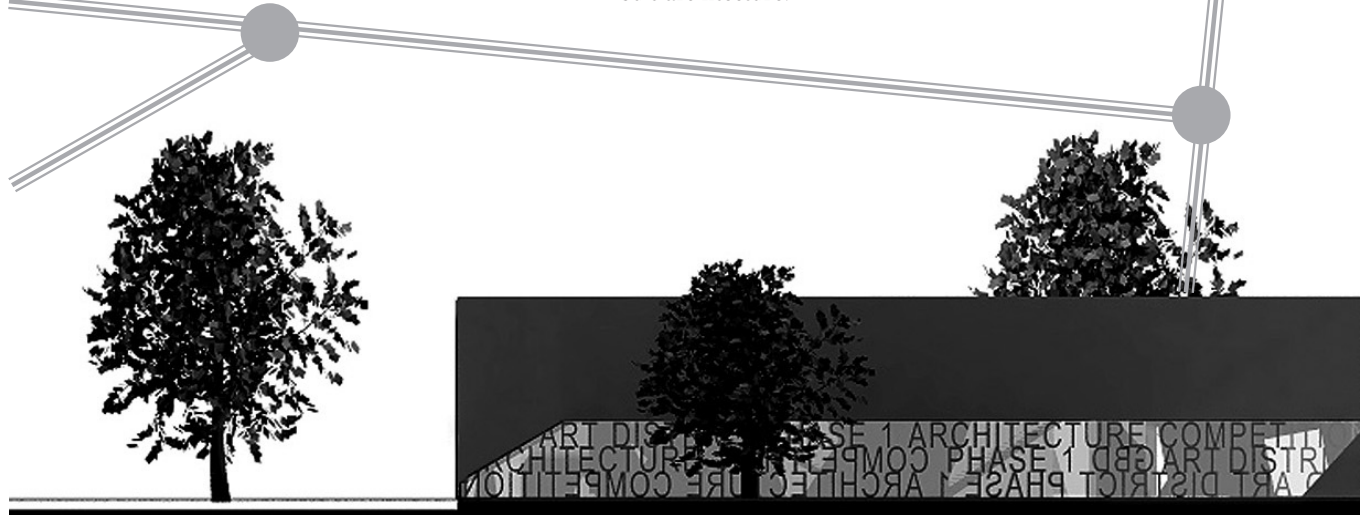
He titled his work *Square No 60* for two reasons. "The committee asked us to choose an area for our design, and I chose a No 60 because its shape is square. That explains why I put 'square' in the title." Su even used Tetris in his design paper to create a more direct connection for audience.

Su aims to reate a structure based on changing cubic forms by changing cube locations, combining some cubes,

and breaking others. The same functions put together in different ways will form a 50-square-meter area. Su let them grow to ten-square-meters before they were out of control. "The greatest problem I've faced is that there is already a fixed 500m³ volume, so I have to do intensive design work within the height and room."

"My work is really easy to realize," Su commented, "I know this is a competition organized from bottom to the top: not initiated by the government, but started from needs – that's exactly what the architecture needs to reflect."

Like watching a horror movie or playing Tetris, there is a demand and a product, and this time, the product is Su's architecture.



Photos provided by Zhang Jing

Artists getting it louder

... without being kicked out of their apartments

By He Jianwei

Get It Louder is more a touring party than an exhibition – one where young designers and artists can get together to present themselves as much as they want. The energy and innovation of the young designers and artists has only increased the exhibition's fame.

Get it Louder

Guangzhou

Where: Grandview Mall,
No 228 Tianhe Lu, Tianhe,
Guangzhou
When: June 23-July 7

Shanghai

Where: The Hub Life,
Gonghexin Lu, Zhabei
When: July 21-August 4

Beijing

Where: SOHO Shangdu,
No 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang
When: August 18-September 1



Get It Louder is a “visual noise” show produced by young, talented designers and artists around the globe.

The exhibition was conceived as a platform for showcasing their creativity and personal thought and exploring sources of inspirations in their daily lives. It also examines graphic art and design as lifestyles, attitudes and as an integral part of urban culture.

The exhibition will focus on young creators from Chinese backgrounds who work in different locations around the world. To give the exhibition an international scope, Get It Louder has also invited talented creators from Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Germany, Sweden and the US to join. Rather than focus on a particular format or medium, the exhibition will bring in fresh and innovative art works from a diverse range of creative fields, including print, web, moving images, photography, video, fashion and more.

Get It Louder is the first art and design exhibition and event of its kind held on the Chinese mainland since 2005, and it has become a large-scale touring biennale. This year, Get It Louder will be in three cities: Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing.

Nine curators from four countries will work together to prepare this year's biennale.

Keywords of Get It Louder 2007

Shopping Mall

Get It Louder will take place in shopping malls this year. “We have a plan for this year's Get It Louder to make people stumble into the art, so we hope to put all the works in places where people who are out shopping can encounter them,” Ou Ning, curator-in-chief of Get It Louder 2007, said. As a curator, he co-founded the large-scale tour in 2005.

Liang Jingyu, the principal architect of Approach Architecture Studio, is in charge of the architecture in the exhibition. “It's the first time we've put an exhibition in a shopping mall. We need to make sure that whatever we do doesn't disturb normal commercial activity there,” he said.

“We will use the public space in the malls to exhibit our works. A guide book will be available for audiences who are trying to track down all the works,” he said.

Homeshow

Homeshow is a specific term for Chinese designers and artists.

At the turn of the century, Chinese sound art pioneers Li Jiahong, Ji Mu and friends couldn't find an appropriate location to perform in Hangzhou. To overcome the dilemma, they began performing in their own homes or in friends'.

Get It Louder 2007 took that idea and applied it to a large scale, where it became known as *jialixiu*, which through a homophone slip turned into *galixiu*, or “curry show.”

Homeshow is the collective phrase for utilizing private space for small-scale artistic activities and exhibits. People can use spare space to show off art, designs, film and sound. Homeshow is the natural result of a lack of public space in Chinese society. It can be understood as subversion or extension of the traditional public space; it blurs the conventions of public and private and develops a new urban interpersonal culture. It's a guerrilla subculture tactic under the radar of the mainstream.

“We will promote it as a guerrilla space for the young and underground urbanites of China, and it's a unique forum for our exhibition this year,” Ou said.

The logo designer

Rex Koo, a graphic artist from Hong Kong, designed the logo for Get It Louder 2007. Last September, the organizers invited him to design the logo. He spent two weeks on the project.

“The logo tells people to speak their own voice,” he said.

“Since this is an exhibition about young creators, I choose pink and green as the main colors because they represent happiness and youth,” he said.





1.3 Billion by Ren Hongwei



On the Highland by Li Jikai

By Qiu Jiaoning

New media, new lifestyles and the pressure of modern reality have influenced a young generation of artists to turn to different means of expression. The 2007 Beijing 798 Art Festival will be held from April 28 to May 12 at Dashanzi 798 Art District in Beijing. As individual as each category and artist is, together these exhibits share the unique perspective of the post-70s generation. The art of this generation has forged a unique visual language using new mediums such as illustration, new media, flash animation and comic art.

Main exhibition

The main exhibition of the 2007 Beijing 798 Art Festival will present the work of post-70s artists who preserved their penchant for artistic expression, who stand firm and look from their own viewpoints at the city they live in and the lives passing by. Their beautiful works challenge viewers' imaginations to understand a subjective world on the subconscious level.

The main exhibition of 2007 Beijing 798 Art Festival is named "Off-center Generation — Post-70s Group Exhibition." "I hope the exhibition will emphatically display the type of 'off-center' characteristics often found in the late-70s and 80s generation of artists. More recent artists have thrived at a time of national growth and artistic renaissance, enjoying material wealth, economic opportunities and relative freedom," Zhu Qi, chief curator, said.

The difference between this newer generation and previous ones shows itself in the self-amusement and self-contentment they revel in — a desire for fantasy, transcendence, cuteness, spontaneity and imagination.

The main exhibition will feature more than 40 painters, three in photographers, 12 in sculptors, three video and two installation artists. Among their colorful works, Yang Na's *The Smell of Loving* series, Zou Cao's *Growing Up* series and Cui Xiuwen's *Angel* series are the highlights.



Angel by Cui Xiuwen

Cui Xiuwen and her Angel series

Cui Xiuwen is a very attractive woman. Her strength and certainty seem to have naturally transformed into a desire for home and family, and a wish for maternity. These are the images her last photographic series *Angel* inspired. "The protagonist is still a young girl, because, in the end, the spirit never changes. We try to remain children forever," Cui said.

The growth process perfectly parallels Cui's practice. "I am always working on ideas ... and keep the process fluidic so that images can evolve at any point. It is so important to be open to evolving your work, which is why I never have it all mapped out before I begin." Thus, with *Angel*, the finished pieces are quite different in parts from the initial point of departure; primarily in the added challenge of working with a new model and coaching her for the role. At first, Cui sensed the girl might not be ideal, but in working with her was impressed at how quickly she responded to the directives she gave her. Perhaps, it even turned out better than expected.

The artist and her young model have been able to recreate strong emotion. Rows of white young girls, ghost-like girls, the same girl obsessively repeated, "angels," are lined up in a circle of Hell or Heaven, depending on whether we condemn or absolve them.

Zou Cao and Growing Up

As an artist and a doctor of philosophy, Zou Cao's academic experience is the envy of everybody. He has done a lot of research into both intellectual history and art history. With this academic accumulation, it is impossible for Zou Cao to enter the art field simply by experiment; on the contrary, he attaches more importance to the presentation of thought and notion.

His works can be divided into two groups: one which involves the growth of ego and cultural memory, the other, the contradiction of world politics. They reflect two extremes of modern man's confusion, ego and society. It is interesting to note that Zou Cao doesn't use a paintbrush or camera, but his own fingerprints to give form to a kind of special image language. This method, simple and primitive, often used in contemporary art, not only refreshes the language, but also incarnates a cultural identity.

Growing Up is more important in Zou's series of fingerprints. It consists of twelve paintings. The artist chooses portraits taken when he was born, in high school, at college and at present, along with the portraits of Chinese leaders of four generations including Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, as well as four influential international figures: Henry Alfred Kissinger, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, Yasser Arafat and Osama Bin Laden.

Post-70s highlight



Sweet Tooth by Yang Na



Growing Up by Zou Cao

s generation ts 798 Art Festival



9
798 Art Festival



Photos provided by Gong Mujia

Yang Na and her Sweet Tooth

Chongqing-based Yang Na intentionally paints characters with very big heads and very small bodies. They are somewhat like aliens in sci-fi movies, having the traits of cartoons. The design is favored by Chinese artists in the computer age.

"Despite representing high-brow in sci-fi, it often symbolizes mental deficiency in reality. Intelligence and stupidity are contradictions. It is obvious that today's young people do not just spend happily and have a cruel youth. They are often confused when faced with personal conflicts," Professor Wang Lin of the Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, a famous Chinese critic, said.

Yang's works are good at grabbing attention with their bright and grandiloquent partial portrayals, with reasonable narratives that imply people's psychological state through details, poses and gestures. The decorative depiction has a dollish appearance, enhancing its spirit of nihilism.

"It also brings a certain readability to the works and makes the painter's pathos and chanting of youthful life pervade the picture like background music, unconsciously enveloping you in the painter's chosen emotion," Wang said.



Bolzano Gold by Peter Greenaway & Istvan Horkay

Digital art exhibition

By He Jianwei

Montage, as a technique in film editing, is quite familiar to us. In movies and videos, montage has been used everywhere. Collage, with the emergence of digital art, has revealed reality in a new way.

In this year's 798 Art Festival, international video exhibition will introduce new concepts in digital art that showcase the charm of collage.

The digital art exhibition has drawn seven videos which reveal the art of collage, shown at last year's International Digital Art and Harries National Digital Art Awards.

International Digital Art (IDA) is an authoritative international digital art organization based in Melbourne, Australia. Similar to SIGGRAPH from the US and ONEDOTZERO from the UK, IDA has become one of the top digital art events in the world.

The curator Xu Dawei discussed new ideas about digital art and recommended two artists and their videos.

Deepening understanding

The exhibition's theme is the collage of reality. "Collage is a new way to create digital video art; it is totally different from the traditional medium of film," he said.

"Digital art is different from documentary. The traditional way is montage, and the new digital art is collage," he said.

"The experience of digital art is active, not passive, for the audience. If the audience doesn't participate, they will not see the work," he said.

"There are seven videos total from eight artists to be exhibited. The length of each video will be no more than five minutes," Xu said.

Xu said he believes the seven videos will provide an opportunity for audiences to learn the new concepts in digital art. "Digital art in China is very young, and we need to expand our understanding of the medium by seeing the world's digital masters," he said.

Earphonea are available for the audience to watch the video. "We ran the seven videos in a big warehouse. The earphones ensure that each audience group can view the video undisturbed by other works playing in the warehouse," he said.

Peter Greenaway & Istvan Horkay

Peter Greenaway is Xu's most recommended artist in the exhibition of digital arts. Although originally trained as a painter, Greenaway is considered one of

the most ambitious and controversial filmmakers.

"Greenaway is influenced by theories of structural linguistics, ethnography and philosophy, and his films cross into a new field. He explores the boundaries of the film medium by rejecting formal narrative structures in favor of awe-striking imagery, changing meanings and emotional tension," Xu said.

Istvan Horkay is a leading Hungarian digital artist who is currently the creative director for the Peter Greenaway/Cassandra Production Company.

Peter Greenaway and Istvan Horkay's video *Bolzano Gold* is a collaborative digital collage and flash animation project devoted to historical wartime.

Greenaway aims to re-educate people for the post-digital age. "My audience has three categories. The first category is people who decide after the first five minutes that they've made a mistake and leave. The second category is people who give the film a chance and leave annoyed after 40 minutes. The third category includes people who watch the whole film and return to see it again. If I'm able to persuade 33 percent to stay, then I can say I've succeeded," Greenaway said.

Stephen Danzig and his Chapters From the Outside World

Chapters From the Outside World is a new series of photomedia works and video installations by artist Stephen Danzig. Exploring recent Islamic fundamentalism and turmoil in the Middle East, Danzig draws parallels and similarities to neoconservative American culture.

Danzig examines how mass media propagates a linear idea via "journalistic integrity" and promise to uphold a "non-biased" perspective.

The artist plays several cameo roles in his own work. He places himself on the front line as a Muslim under attack. In another image he appears as a battered newsreader that deconstructs himself before his audience, and also sits as the voice of God in the video.

"There is a depth in this work which clearly shows an intellectual rigor and an unflinching nerve. We are all affected by world events and Steve's new series presents deeply provocative imagery. It is important work, emotionally and socially," Jan Manton, gallery director of Jan Manton Art, said.

Danzig's work is included in the Artbank, QUT Art museum and the New Museum of Contemporary Art New York collection, as well as in many private collections.



Chapters From the Outside World by Stephen Danzig

Editors: Yu Shanshan Qiu Jiaoning Designer: Yang Gen

BEIJING TODAY

Jianwai SOHO

From myth to creativity

By Gan Tian

Mention SOHO areas in Beijing, and no one glosses over Jianwai SOHO. Right to the south of the World Trade Center, the buildings cover some 700,000 square meters, including 18 apartment buildings, two office buildings, four small office rooms and one business street. The area occupies a very good location, and provides an environment for living, working, entertaining, leisure and anything else a city dweller might need. We might say that Jianwai SOHO itself is a work of creativity, if not of art.

How many creative shops are there here? I don't know. I searched through so many for the whole day, but at the end of the day, I found even more. If you are an "in" guy, or a shopping nut, or a trend-setter, this might already be a place you will never miss. Come with me.



It's not Barbie time any more

By Gan Tian

Girls under 15 years old play with Barbie, but the rest are playing with Pullip Dolls these days. Maybe Dolls is where you can meet the Pullip Dolls and discover all of their trendy accessories.

Pullip is already the most fashionable brand in Asia. It (or should I say, she) sports designs

that appeal to the typical Asian girl's image. Having an exaggerated face and big eyes, fashion follows wherever she goes. She has more than 20 parts that can be moved, and her eyes can even twinkle! As soon as a Japanese company designed the doll, it became the most popular doll among young ladies and male admirers.

You can change her clothes, paint her nails, give her strange hairstyles, and even find her a boyfriend – whatever a real girl can do, she can do it. The amazing thing is you can do it all here! The shop provides you with her trendy clothes, hairpins, nail polish and make-up.

The people who play Pullip have already

formed a group.

Here you can find folks who have the same hobbies as you.

Looking at those dolls, standing in boxes or on glass shelves, as if they were all waiting for a prince to choose them, suddenly I realized everyone has a doll dream, and when the sweet and girl-ish Barbie time is over, that dream becomes about the powerful Pullip. Fashion changes rapidly. Pity.

Maybe Dolls

Where: No 9226, F/2, Building 9, Jianwai SOHO, No 4, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang
Open: 9:30pm-6pm
Tel: 5869 5925



Creation means caring about every detail

By Gan Tian

Villa 9 in the SOHO square attracts your eye with its obvious red Levi's logo. Yes, that's the Levi's SOHO flagship store, which opened in November last year.

The creations in this shop are not limited to 501s and T-shirts. This store is fabulous in design and in the exhibition of its products. The three top floors are decorated with ceiling-to-floor glass. Through the transparent and shining storefront, you can see the various Levi's products resting on the shelves. This is the first time Levi's Asia Pacific has used a team to design the inside of a store, and it worked – you can see every detail of the store is shaped by design concepts that highlight the product.

Walking into the shop, the decor creates a wild, western cowboy aesthetics, but at the same time, you will also feel that it bears some traditional Chinese elements – that's where the magic lies. Standing on the wooden spiral staircase with bronze railings, you'll see everything with no obstructions.

There is a modern painting on the wall near the stairs, from the first floor to the third. It has the simplest lines, but the deepest meaning: to create something new means you should pay attention to every detail of your life. Just like Levi's products and its shop.

Levi's SOHO

Where: F/1, F2, F/3, Villa 9, Jianwai SOHO
Open: 10am-9:20pm
Tel: 5869 1948



Photos by Li Shaolin

(Continued on page 11...)

Be creative, be fabulous

By Gan Tian

The Mr Panda Shop covers only 15 square meters, but holds the most interesting toys in town.

You can't imagine what you'll find here. The first thing that impressed me was a Coca Cola can. It's almost the weight of a coke can, but Mr Panda told me to open it, and I found a T-shirt inside it! Compressed into the little can, the T-shirt is very wrinkled after it is unfolded, but that just adds more of a trendy edge to its style.

I also found tons of robots and rabbits there. A 30-centimeter high blue monster stands outside the shop, welcoming customers. Inside, little bears stand on the shelves. Each one looks different. Mr Panda painted all of them himself – he told me he is doing design work for Apple Computer, and other famous companies. No wonder the bears look so delicate and strangely glorious.

All the products in Mr Panda's shop are created by Mr Panda or with his colleagues. "I hope we can stand together to form a design team. It's difficult for Chinese independent designers, as they don't have a platform to connect with business, but many of them are doing so well, except some who become too individualized."

The little shop frequently holds design, music and movie parties with the nearby Mel-

low Tea Cafe. The next one is from 3pm to 9pm on May 12, and I was luckily invited.

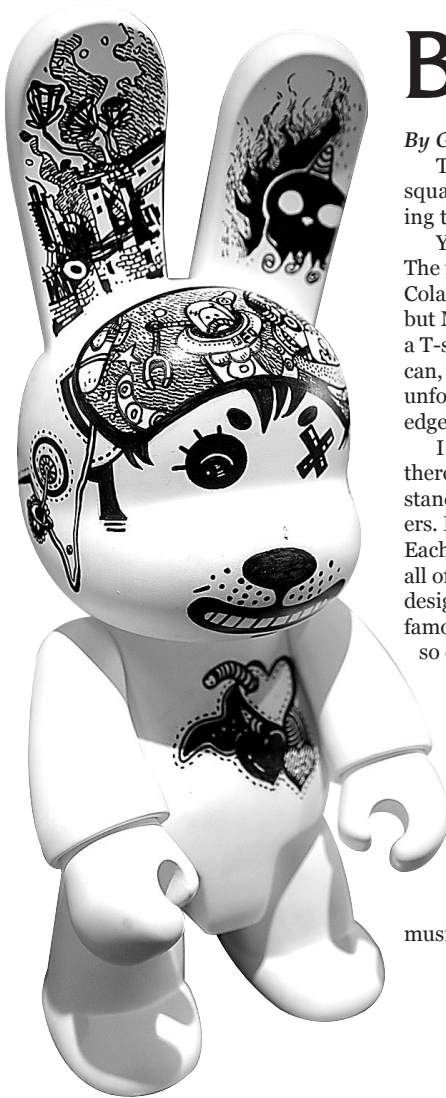
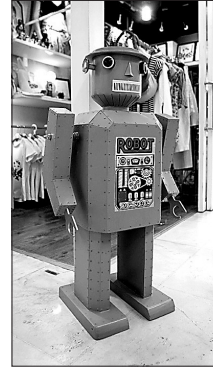
I searched around in the little shop, and found a rainbow flag in an obvious place. "Are you gay?" I didn't think and asked it out loud. To my great surprise, he answered, "Sure. Look at this!" Then he showed me his mobile belt, also his own product – another rainbow pattern representing homosexuality. Wordlessly, I stood there, believing a sentence I had heard before, "Be gay, be fabulous." I had heard that it was a rule that gay people are very creative. In this case, it's true.

Mr Panda Shop

Where: 9218, F/2, Building 9, Jianwai SOHO, No 4, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang

Open: 9am-8pm

Tel: 139 1189 0118



Make your life a mini-Disneyland

By Gan Tian

When I was a kid, I used to think that I was the Lion King and had some glorious destiny in store. I also believed that there was a Princess Jasmine who was waiting for me, and a lamp where the Genie would come out. I have never been to Disneyland – what a pity! – But when I stepped into this little shop, I knew that all my dreams would be realized.

This is "Trendyland," and it attracts not only children, but also fashionable girls. All the waitresses wear white and red polka-dot dresses, in typical Minnie style, and you can even see Mickey's bed, desk and bedroom furniture in the corner of the shop. The store packs convenient life-style products: make-up boxes, key rings, mirrors and even earrings. It also takes its mission from Disney's playbook: make life better.

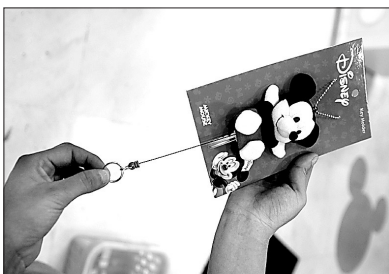
The shop's best products are accessories for girls. However, what I strongly recommend is this Mickey ice cream maker. Nearly half the height of a person, the ice-cream maker has Mickey's image on each side. If you have an appetite for ice cream and want to make it yourself, don't hesitate to let Mickey help. At 932 yuan, this assistant is a little expensive, but summer is coming, so why not have a try?

Trendyland

Where: No 109, F/2, Villa 6, Jianwai SOHO, No 4, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang

Open: 10am-9pm

Tel: 5869 9225



Colorful pictures mean childhood again

By Gan Tian

Any place that calls itself the "Kid's Republic" must be something special. This was supposedly the first professional picture shop in Beijing. Both parents and kids can enjoy a very relaxed environment.

Walking up the rainbow stairs to the second floor, you'll see a colorful world. Four walls are decorated with bookshelves, but all the books are for the learning-to-read set. There is a play area. Sunk into the floor and covered with a seven-color carpet, it is especially for children to play games with each other.

Actually, you don't only buy books here. Let me break it down: you are busy, you have kids, and you want them to grow up right. You can send them to stay here all morning, all day, or even a whole week. They will

have fun reading with children from different nations. The republic hires professional aunts to read for children, teach them how to play and help them to understand life and love. Sound like advanced kindergarten?

Don't worry if junior doesn't know Chinese. They can provide you with English, Japanese and Korean picture books. I bet it's okay if you don't understand any of these languages, as they are picture book shop. Everyone can find their place here.

However, sitting there, watching only the kids play on a warm afternoon can still be happy for grown-ups, especially if one of the kids is yours.

Kid's Republic

Where: F1, F2, Building 13, Jianwai SOHO, No 4, Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang

Open: 10am-7pm after the holiday

Tel: 5869 3032



Photos by Li Shaolin

Our best plates

From the concept to the interior design, from the menu to the food quality, the following seven eateries – there is even one organic store – are the ones we picked as the best examples of Beijing's creative plates.



Wasabi sauce shrimp boat

Le Quai restaurant and lounge: upper crust

By Chu Meng

Spring means renewal on all fronts. I shed my overcoat and went in search of something tasty for food lovers grateful to see the end of winter hot pots and soups.

Le Quai, a former Anhui restaurant that moved brick by brick to its new location, is dining at its finest. With east-meets-west concoctions, creative cocktails and a view of the Gongti River, it is perfect for a summer evening.

This is a perfect venue for lunch, not least because it is in the heart of the city. Manager Judy Zhu's warm welcome to customers is standard, virtually a guarantee that Le Quai has much to offer the discerning diner. It's no surprise then that the restaurant is a current favorite of Beijing's smart set, who have educated palates but who are known to change their "in" place with alacrity.

With a 200-year-old Qing Dynasty interior reconstructed from the home of a nobleman from Jingdezhen city in Jiangxi, Le Quai cultivates an atmo-



Le Quai's monochromatic main dining area

Photos provided by Le Quai

sphere of exclusivity.

There is something eminent about the food, too. Mango and Japanese crab roe salad, flambéed sea snail served in flaming Hennessy VSOP brandy and fragrant sautéed shrimp balls with hot pepper are some of the house delicacies served with a professional flourish.

Overall restaurant service in China is often a notch above other places in the world. Beijing is no exception. Le Quai is something of an ambassador in this regard. The service is efficient and convivial, and the wait staff is diplomatic to a fault in never intruding on the fine dining experience offered.

Le Quai caters to business diners and

visiting VIPs. It is advisable to book a table. Arrive early for your meal and take time to visit the Beijing Art Now Gallery (BANG), upstairs, accessible from within the restaurant. You can buy competitively priced contemporary Chinese artworks there

Le Quai

Where: Inside Worker's Stadium, Across from Gate 12, with access off Gonti Bei Lu, Chaoyang

Open: 11am-2am

Tel: 6551 1636,

6551 5156

Cost: 150 yuan

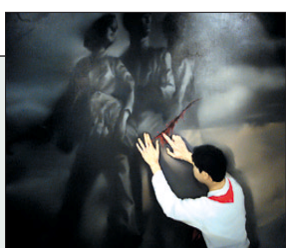


Beef slices stir fried with green beans and sesame seeds



The art gallery area of Le Quai

Photos provided by Green Tea House



The art gallery area of Le Quai



Omelette vanilla-flavored sauce

Green Tea House defies tradition

By Chu Meng

Green Tea House's signature dishes are tea-infused creations that have been termed neo-classical Chinese, yet are in fact wholly innovative. The 15,000 square meters of white dining area is home to furniture and decor that is minimalist and industrial, yet chic and elegant in design. Green Tea

House gives you the choice of defying tradition for a traditional New Year's Eve dinner.

It is a truly contemporary space, but one that has remained surprisingly true to the rules of traditional Chinese aesthetics. This creative fusion is further enhanced by the use of sensual natural elements such as silk, velvet and wood against its stark white backdrop, all coming together in a breathtakingly impressive dining environment.

Art is the soul of Green Tea House, as evidenced by rarely made and even more rarely true claim that the restaurant

employs as many musicians as it does chefs. Partially visible from the main dining area, an ever-changing exhibition space for Chinese and foreign artists showcase Chinese-inspired sculptures and paintings.

The unique Green Tea House menu is a series of exceptional dishes that combine tea, traditional northern Chinese recipes and non-Chinese ingredients, all set off with a novel artistic element, such as plates formed from palm leaves, glass or marble. The Green Tea House is without a doubt one of Asia's finest dining experiences, where every meal really can be a work of art.

Green Tea House

Where: No 6 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang

Open: 11:30am-3pm, 6pm-12pm

Tel: 6552 8310, 6552 8311, 13601137132

Noodles or Mian

By Chu Meng

The Noodle Loft is a fashionable place. In Chinese characters, Noodle Loft's name is *Mian Ku*, which means "noodle cool." The restaurant features flour-based cuisine from the Shanxi region of China.

Ordering at Noodle Loft is a multi-stage affair. First, you order the type of noodle, then make your choice of sauce. I got the one strand green noodle, which is made with spinach juice. This noodle is a special treat at Chinese birthday dinners, because the "one strand" signifies longevity. The sauce I chose was egg and tomato, the most classic match of Chinese cuisine materials.

The chef also recommended I try

three other kinds of noodles: Shanxi pasta flakes, which are pinched off a strip of dough and then flung into the pot; fish-shaped fried oat noodles, which are cut off a hunk of dough



Cheese cake lemon noodle salad

with scissors; and the hand-shaved noodles, which are shaved of a block of dough resting on the chef's shoulder. Sauce recommendations for each: fried pork, beef in sauce, and pork in sauce.

If I had still had even a bit of

room left in my stomach, I would have tried all of them.

I loaded up on other dishes, a decision I couldn't regret too much. The hot and sour cabbage had dried red chilies and Sichuan peppercorns, the combination of which was unexpected but delicious. It leaves your mouth a little numb, but you will not be able to stop eating it.

The jellyfish was an excellent rendition of a standard dish, cold and dressed with a soy-vinegar sauce. The cucumber slices added a refreshing touch.

Noodle Loft

Where: 20 Dawang Lu, Chaoyang

Open: 11am-2:30pm,

5:30pm-10:30pm

Tel: 6774 9950

Cost: 80-100 yuan per person



Making noodles is a performance art

Photos provided by Noodles Loft

(Continued on page 13)



The exterior of People 8

Photos by Chu Meng



People 8's stylish interior

A great meal if you can find the door



An inside view of People 8

A feast set amidst the Cultural Revolution

By Jackie Zhang

Red Classical Restaurant's remote location outside east Fifth Ring Road doesn't prevent it from being popular, particularly with its theme of memorializing the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

There is a red star on the gate of the restaurant. The whole place was reconstructed from a large storehouse. There are huge slogan-bearing banners hanging on the walls, such as "Long, long live the Communist Party of China" and "Long, long live Chairman Mao."

Once you enter the restaurant, staff dressed in soldier's uniforms salute, welcoming you loudly. All the staff members are dressed like red guards. Their hair is combed into plaits, and they carry military packs, with red bands on their arms.

There are performances every day at the restaurant, mostly recreating the songs and dances of the Cultural Revolution. The most famous are the *zhongziwu* (royal dance) and the *yangbanxi* (model opera).

The restaurant serves Dongbei dishes. Catfish served in metal pots, black soybean milk, *tiebingzi* (baked corn or millet cakes in a pan) and *luandun*, a well-known traditional



Inside Red Classical



A waiter in a red guard uniform



A show at Red Classical

Photos provided by Red Classical

Where: No 226, Baijia Lou, outside Dong Wuhuan Lu, Chaoyang
Open: 9am-10pm
Tel: 6574 8289
Cost: 50 to 60 yuan per person

Dongbei dish made by pot-roasting vegetables like eggplants, tomatoes, pumpkin, potato, mushrooms together, are most popular among customers.

Most middle-aged people feel nice and reminiscent when dining in the restaurant. Some of them even go on stage to sing and dance together with the restaurant's performers. "It makes me recall the past," said a middle-aged man having lunch with his family.

"For us who experienced the revolution, the restaurant is a nice place to reminisce. The royal dance, model opera and the dress of the staff here make me feel as if I am in the Cultural Revolution again. Although it was hard at that time, it is a part of my memory," he said.

But some also complain that the music in the restaurant is noisy. Perhaps most frustrating is a prohibition on photography inside the restaurant, which disappoints many people who want to record their experience.

Red Classical Restaurant

By Jackie Zhang

People 8, located in a bamboo grove near the Scitech Plaza along Chang'an Jie, is a Japanese restaurant. However, if you want to taste the delicious food there, you have to find the door in first.

People 8 in Chinese is called Xuan Ba, based on the character "玄" The character often evokes a feeling of ambiguity or mystery and implies that something cannot be understood or even fathomed. In line with this spirit, the designer of the restaurant, Christopher Arisaka Carey, a young Japanese American architect, designed an imposing fake iron door on the east side of the restaurant's first floor that cannot be opened. In reality, the real entrance is humbly hidden away at the end of a stone path within a bamboo grove. It is a new game that People 8 provides to its guests to tease their friends with.

Another interesting point of the restaurant is that, inside, it is completely black. Once you enter the restaurant, be careful not to be stunned by the darkness. You won't see light until you grope your way upstairs. But it is considerate that there is a mini electric torch on each table, which, at least, can help you find the way to the washroom.

Almost every dish served in People 8 is delicious. As it is the eighth restaurant of the Shintori Collection Restaurants, some of the dishes served here are selected from the most popular ones among the menus of the other seven. Roasted fish served with buckwheat and miso is strongly recommended. Desserts and drinks including pencil vase salad, green tea tiramisu, red bean ice cream and iced milk tea are also quite nice.

Furthermore, the dishes at People 8 are all served in specially shaped containers. High glass bottles, crystal earthen bowls, long plates and stone pots are all specially designed to give guests an interesting and exquisite feeling.

Where: No 18 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang

Open: 11:30am-2:30pm, 5:30pm-11pm (last order 10pm)
Drink area: 11:30am-2am (last order 1am)

Tel: 6515 8585
Cost: 200 to 250 yuan

Lohao City

Headquarters: No 52, Jingshun Lu, Sunhe, Chaoyang
Branch store 1: B4, No 29, Lucky Street, Chaoyang
Branch store 2: 10A, Bldg 5, No 76, Nan'er Lu, Baizhiwan, Chaoyang
Tel: 8459 4332

Lohao City: organic food fresh and cool

By Annie Wei

Lucky Street, behind the Kempinski hotel, has a cute new organic store.

The store has everything from rice, flour, vegetables, oils and vinegars to meats, and even a section with wines made from organic grapes.

Lohao City, the new organic chain store, is gaining fame in town. Yan, the public relations

officer, told *Beijing Today* that they receive media requests almost everyday.

"The name doesn't mean that our products are 100 percent organic yet," she explained, "As a supermarket, we need to have everything a customer might need in their daily life. For certain products, we haven't found the right organic suppliers, so we still sell the non-organic ones."

Zhiwan organic ranch, which is owned by Lohao City, produces organic vegetables and meats.

I was curious about whether the organic ranch is worth a visit, but Yan denied it.

"Our organic ranch is in Miyun county, two-hours from Beijing. To preserve the natural environment, we do not allow visitors to stay overnight."

Whale Inside

A dark restaurant ideal for blind date

By Chu Meng

As Asia's first in-the-dark dining experience, Whale Inside offers Beijing's gastronomes a taste of blind living. Since the restaurant opened for its trial run on December 22, over 700 people have come to see or not see what it is like to eat in total darkness.

Customers choose from a set menu in the well-lit lobby before entering the dining area. Before patrons can enter the inky black dining room, staff confiscate all light-producing paraphernalia such as mobile phones, digital watches, matches and lighters.

Inside, foodies feast on meals in a photon-less dining room, where they can't see their surroundings, their food or their dinner companions. The dining experience involves searching for spoons, groping for glasses and floundering to find the food. The concept is that by eating without the distractions of presentation and decor, diners are better able to savor the taste of their meals.

"When you're deprived of sight, your other senses kick into high gear," explained manager He Zaijin. "Because of that, we place a greater emphasis on fragrance, especially with our soups."

Currently, diners can choose between two set meals: the Dark Classic set and the For Lovers set, which is particularly appropriate for a blind date.

Eventually, the restaurant plans to expand its set menu to include six additional options: the Business set, Vegetarian set, Family set, Friends set, Whale set and Secret set.

The Dark Classic set includes a soup, two "mystery" entrees, two main courses and a fruit pudding for 138 yuan. At 214 yuan for two, the For Lovers Set includes soup, a plate of seven mystery foods, two entrees, two main dishes and a fruit platter for dessert.

Whale Inside

Where: No 10 Building, SOHO, Dong Sanhuan Lu, Chaoyang
Open: 12am-12pm
Tel: 5869 4235, 5900 0343
Cost: 110 yuan per person



Waitstaff in night-vision goggles

Photo provided by Whale Inside

An old factory becomes the city's new fashion park



D Park

The former "751 Factory" in 798 district reopened when the government announced last Sunday that the place newly named "D.Park"

was to become the future of Beijing's creative industry – a fashion creation park combining fashion design, product development and exhibition displays.

The new D.Park is mainly the two red buildings beside the two high chimneys; inside, unique space design artfully combines old things and new ideas.

This old factory was one of the important projects of the "First Five Year Plan," supported by East Germany. Two huge gas storage tanks, several big blast furnaces and boilers, machinery, transmission pipelines, all of them tell the history of Beijing's

The designers and their studios

Building A is built for fashion shows, with a T stage and an auditorium. Important fashion shows and fashion news releases will mainly happen here. Building B is located opposite the Building A, and houses the five designers' studios.

The masters turn their own studios into special stages to showcase their originality and imagination.

Most studios focus on haute couture or high-end ready-to-wear items. For instance, Liu Wei, designer of Rosew, said that an ordered suit usually costs about 4,000 yuan while Zeng Fengfei, who is famed for tailoring Chinese classic suits, said the ready-made in his studio was above 1,000 yuan.

Liu Wei studio

Among the five studios, Liu Wei's studio focuses on sales not only to suppliers and stores, but also to the individual buyers.

A pink staircase and big green plants turn Liu Wei's studio into a romantic dating place for lovers. However, a giant steel machine left over from the old times occupies half of the space. "We keep it to produce a beauty of contrast, because my works are feminized," said Liu. The fashionable studio is divided into two rooms. One is for the design studio, the other, decorated like a showroom, displays the spring and summer lines. Liu said fashionable girls always come here to experience the top design atmosphere.

Rosew brand was born in a small residential district five years ago. Liu said creating Rosew was a hard experience. To achieve her dream, Liu gave up a high salary and chose to work to create her own brand. Recalling Rosew's birth, Liu said everyday was full of designing, drafting and delivering items. "My brand grew bit by bit and became healthier," Liu said. She pointed to some cypress trees at the gate of the studio and said she chose those small cypress trees, as opposed to other stronger and pretty cypress trees, hoping that the small cypress trees could grow with the Rosew.

A-You studio

You Hongyan and her A-You studio are mainly focused on the creation of conceptual works that aim to fuse Chinese folk art and fashion. A-You's studio has a tie-dyeing exhibit hall that is full of A-You's folk handiwork characters. White cotton jelly fish swim in the air of the studio. The works in the studio are mainly for concept display – not for sale.

Right now, A-You's display space is filled mostly with "bandhnus," made from a method of dyeing

By Han Manman

After driving along the airport speedway, passing through the Dashanzi exit and going through the 1,000-meter-long "798 Art Corridor" on Jiuxianqiao Lu, you can see two red buildings flanked by two high chimneys. This edifice is the unassuming landmark of the new fashion hub D. Park, a springboard planning to take more Chinese design powers into the limelight.

heavy industry. Now, continued development has ended its role as a factory.

At the beginning of 2006, in order to carry out the government's plan of building up "Fashion in Beijing," the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Industrial Development and the China Fashion Association started to design and build a fashion hub. After visiting and negotiating over more than ten unused factories, 751 factory was selected. After 9 months' planning and hard work, the new D.Park opened.

D.Park now houses five famous designers' studios, including Ayou Studio, Zeng Fengfei Studio, Liuwei Studio and Wu Xuewei/Wu Xuekai Studio, as well as 30 young designers, modeling agencies and exhibition design companies.

D.Park has also established a public service platform supplying information, training and meeting rooms in order to give the fashion elites here a better environment.

where the cloth is tied in different places, to prevent the parts tied from receiving the dye. Different regions around China have different styles of dyeing. "We chose *bandhnu* from Dali, Yunnan because of its purity and romance," You said.

"We want to build a bridge between Chinese folk art and modern industrial design in order to have more and more people in other countries learn about Chinese folk art and Chinese designers," You said.

Other studios

Big scrolls of Chinese calligraphy occupy all four walls of Zeng Fengfei's studio. Asked why he put his studio here, Zeng said, "This place could be called the best place for our designers. There is such a strong atmosphere of art, which inspired me to put more creativity into my work." He added that before D.Park was established, the designers were separated and in different places. Now, they work in the same building, potentially forming designers' circles and improving the communication.

Wu Xuewei/Wu Xuekai Studio is the only one in the building that closes its doors. Visitors need to knock on the glass door to ask if it is OK for a visit. Located on the second floor of the building, Wu Xuewei/Wu Xuekai Studio looks very busy. Some designers are drawing drafts on computers. In the display room, two workers are taking pictures of the new dresses and in the corner room several workers are busy slicing fabric. Fasteners, slide fasteners and materials are everywhere, occupying every bit of surface space.

"These five designers are the first group. We plan to invite 50 to 60 designers to come here," Wang Qing, president of the Chinese Fashion Designers' Association, said.



Photos by Tian Yufeng



Beijingers' online creativity

By He Jianwei

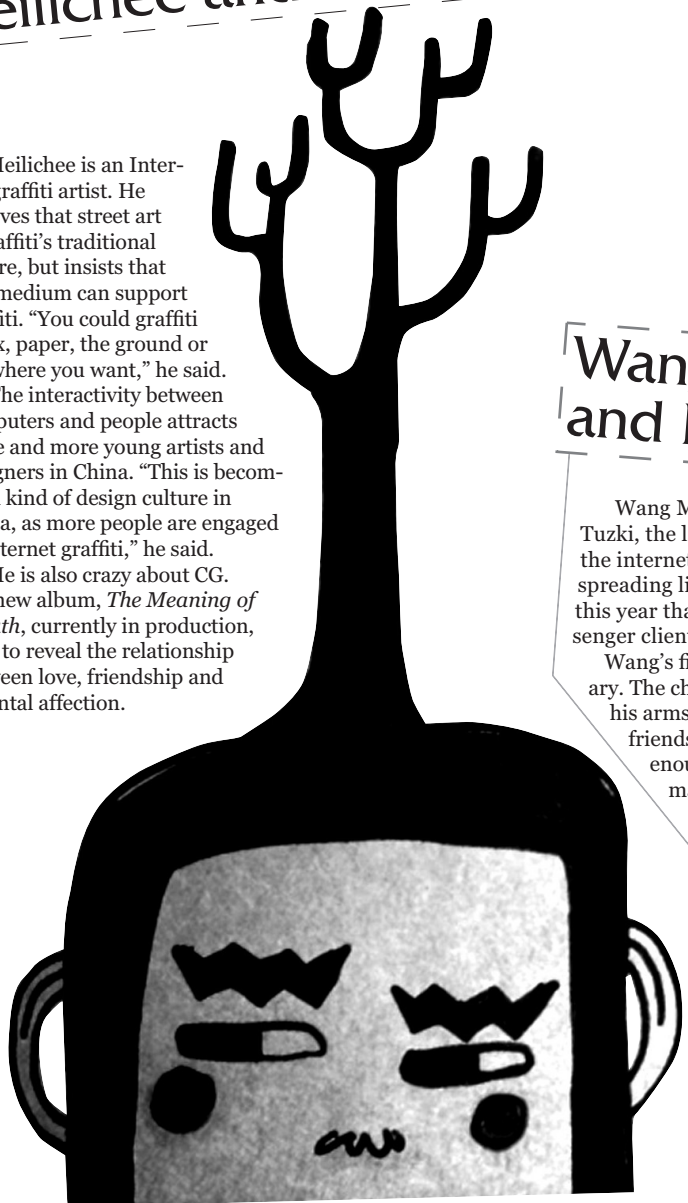
Young people are finding a creative outlet to show off on the Internet. *Beijing Today* brings you three of these imaginative netizens.

Heilichee and Internet graffiti

Heilichee is an Internet graffiti artist. He believes that street art is graffiti's traditional nature, but insists that any medium can support graffiti. "You could graffiti a box, paper, the ground or anywhere you want," he said.

The interactivity between computers and people attracts more and more young artists and designers in China. "This is becoming a kind of design culture in China, as more people are engaged in Internet graffiti," he said.

He is also crazy about CG. His new album, *The Meaning of Breath*, currently in production, tries to reveal the relationship between love, friendship and parental affection.



A typical graffiti of Heilichee

Wang Momo and her Tuzki

Wang Momo is the creator of Tuzki, the latest lagomorph launched on the internet. The newcomer Tuzki has been spreading like wildfire among Chinese netizens this year thanks to the Tencent QQ and MSN Messenger clients.

Wang's first Tuzki design came at the end of January. The character was very simple, and just waved his arms and shook his head. "When chatting with friends on QQ, the default images just weren't enough to express what I wanted to, so I made more pictures of Tuzki," she says. Most of Tuzki's actions are based on her real-life daily experiences. "I exaggerate them based on expressions in daily life," she says.

Previously, she called her character "Tuski." The "s" changed to a "z" after Wang read Isaac Asimov's *Spell My Name with an S*. In the story, the main character, named "Zebatinsky," changes his life by replacing the "z" in his name with an "s," she says.



Tuzki Series 1

Wang Yuwei and the lives of young artists

Wang Yuwei is one of the organizers of a new project, "Unprosperous and Unbroken," which aims to make a panorama of the seven-eighths of designers' lives that are still underwater, and under the radar of mainstream media.

His group started to formally plan the project in January. Since the website and blog were launched during Spring Festival, they have gathered many designers' biographical materials in recorded, written and photographic forms.

Wang is a graphic designer living in Beijing. He believes that design is exchange and communication.

"We named it this because we see the excellent points in Chinese design, but they are still difficult to define. Chinese design is crawling along through small lurches, even though its idealism and creativity are as alive as ever," he said.



Wang Yuwei's Rise series

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Creative websites

By He Jianwei

Creativity is everywhere. With the spread of the Internet, creative ideas are collected on websites. *Beijing Today* has picked five creative personal websites.



tomdaisy.com

Daisy Chan is a fashion designer in Shanghai. Tom Zhuang is a multimedia and graphic designer. They show their artistic works related to web design, illustration, 3-D and logo-prints.



sixstation.com

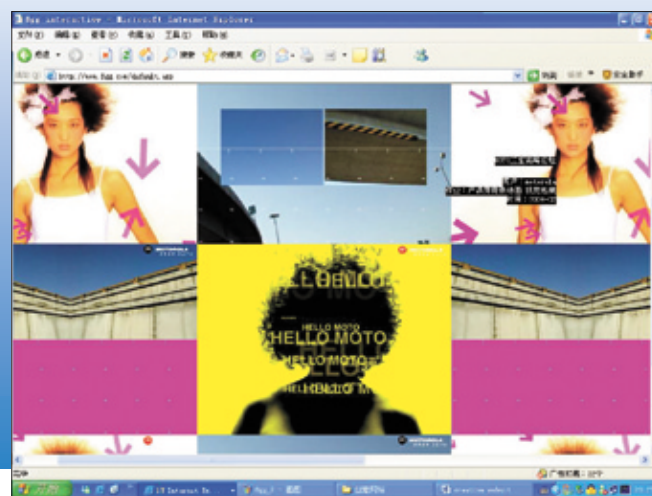
This is a Hong Kong web and graphic design studio, which incorporates a mix of global cultures with an appreciation for sci-fi.

Benny Luk, who graduated from the Kwun Tong Vocational Training Centre, a Hong Kong-based design training center, created this website in 2004.



dayong.name

Dayong is a web engineer and his girlfriend Xiaohua is an office worker in a foreign enterprise. They posted their photos and their experiences from their visit to Europe. They regard the photos and blog as testimony to their love of travel. They visited France, Italy and Greece in 2005, and Germany and Austria in 2006.



8GG.com

8GG is a multimedia duo in Beijing composed of Jiang Haiqing and Fu Yu. Their works include music, video, installations, drama and web art. Their works have been shown in the MAAP01 Excess New Media Festival in Brisbane Australia, the CYNET art exhibition in Dresden Germany, the FILE 2002 electronic language international festival in Brazil, the Capalbio International Short Film Festival in Italy, the 2004 Shanghai Biennial Show and other venues.



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Ou Gaohong is a freelance designer. She blogs about her work in graphic design, web design, illustration, photography and DIY toys.

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